

# SHARPENING SENIORS' MINDS

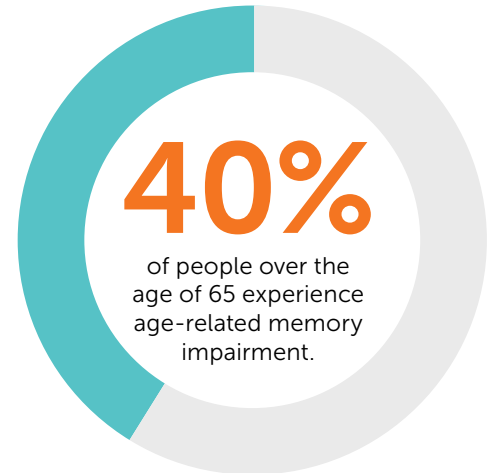
CAREGIVERS



Activities to Help Seniors Stay Mentally Alert

## How to Help Seniors Maintain Their Minds and Memories

In the United States, approximately 40% of people over the age of 65 experience age-related memory impairment. Memory and mental health are closely connected. Helping seniors stay sharp can also improve their quality of life. [\(NCBI\)](#)



### Top Strategies for Maintaining a Healthy Memory

To maintain a healthy memory, seniors must stay mentally active. That doesn't have to be taxing, though! Some strategies for maintaining a healthy memory are things seniors might already do as part of their everyday lives.

- Read and write regularly.
- Play games, solve riddles, and complete puzzles.
- Try learning to play an instrument or take up a new hobby.
- Take a class at a community college, university, or adult education center.
- Spend time in conversation and socializing.

[\(Care.com\)](#)

### Easy Everyday Brain Training

Choose a couple of these training exercises to work the brain every day:

- Do crossword puzzles
- Memorize something
- Write down one new thing you've heard or learned
- Play a challenging game
- Choose a topic to research
- Take a class or listen to a lecture
- Use your non-dominant hand for a simple activity
- Practice using all your senses
- Repeat something you've learned to someone else

[\(Family Doctor\)](#)

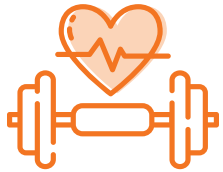
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## Factors Affecting the Memory

The brain is part of the body. Seniors' physical health will affect cognitive function, including memory. Pay attention to factors that affect memory, like:



### Physical Activity

Exercise is good for the brain. Activity promotes good circulation, so your mind gets the oxygen it needs. Plus, your brain and memory both work when you have to make coordinated motions or follow a workout routine.



### Nutrition

Brains need fuel. Research by Harvard University shows that diets high in saturated fat can inhibit memory, while healthy diets rich with fish, whole grains, fruits, and vegetables are good for maintaining a healthy memory.



### Sleep and Rest

A tired brain can't devote as much energy to making or storing memories. Seniors should get plenty of sleep.

([Harvard Health Publishing](#) and [Everyday Health](#))



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## Effects of Memory-Related Impairments

Normal age-related memory loss is not as dangerous as memory-related illnesses, but it can still impact a senior's quality of life. Help seniors recognize the normal effects of memory loss so they can adapt and stay safe.

Common effects of memory loss are:

- Misplacing items
- Delayed critical thinking skills
- Forgetting appointments or directions
- Needing new information repeated in order to remember it

([Cleveland Clinic](#))



## Home Care Tip

Although age-related memory loss is common and may not have serious side effects, memory-related illnesses like dementia, including Alzheimer's disease, can be dangerous. Learn the warning signs, like mixing up words or mood swings.

([Mayo Clinic](#))